

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A contents acquiring device comprising:

cache means for temporarily storing received contents;

acquisition request accepting means for accepting an acquisition request for contents;

5 cache deciding means for deciding whether the contents requested by the acquisition request are stored in the cache means or not;

valid expiration setting means for setting a valid expiration as an update expiration of the contents based on a 10 valid term of the contents when it is decided by the cache deciding means that the contents are stored in the cache means;

acquisition request transmitting means for transmitting the acquisition request for the contents when the contents are 15 out of the valid expiration set by the valid expiration setting means; and

contents receiving means for receiving contents based on the acquisition request transmitted from the acquisition request transmitting means.

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2. The contents acquiring device according to claim 1, further comprising valid term holding means for previously holding a valid term, and valid term addition deciding means for deciding whether the valid term is added to the contents or not when it 5 is decided by the cache deciding means that the contents are

stored in the cache means, the valid expiration setting means serving to set the valid expiration based on a valid term held by the valid term holding means when it is decided by the valid term addition deciding means that the valid term is not added.

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3. A method of acquiring contents comprising the steps of:

    acquisition request accepting means for accepting an acquisition request for contents;

    deciding whether or not the contents requested by the 5 acquisition request accepted at the acquisition request accepting step are stored in a cache for temporarily storing received contents;

    setting a valid expiration as an update expiration of the contents based on a valid term added to the contents when it is 10 decided at the cache deciding step that the contents are stored in the cache;

    transmitting the acquisition request for the contents when the contents are out of the valid expiration set at the valid expiration setting step; and

15     receiving contents corresponding to the acquisition request transmitted at the acquisition request transmitting step.

4. The method of acquiring contents according to claim 3, further comprising the step of deciding whether the valid term is added to the contents or not when it is decided at the cache deciding step that the contents are stored in the cache, the 5 valid expiration setting step serving to set the valid expiration

based on a previously held valid term when it is decided at the valid term addition deciding step that the valid term is not added.

5. A contents server comprising:

- contents storing means for previously storing contents;
- acquisition request receiving means for receiving an acquisition request transmitted when the contents are out of a valid expiration to be an update expiration of the contents stored in a cache which are set based on a valid term of the contents; and
- contents transmitting means for fetching the contents requested by the acquisition request received by the acquisition request receiving means from the contents storing means and for transmitting the contents to a destination of the acquisition request.

6. The contents server according to claim 5, wherein the valid expiration is set based on a valid term previously held in the destination of the acquisition request when the valid term is not added to the contents stored in the cache.

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7. A contents acquiring system comprising:

- a contents acquiring device for transmitting an acquisition request of contents to be an acquisition request object prestored through a network when the contents are out of a valid expiration to be an update expiration of the contents set based on a valid term of the contents and for receiving

contents corresponding thereto; and

a contents server for reading contents corresponding to  
an acquisition request transmitted from the contents acquiring  
device from contents in various fields which are prestored, and  
for transmitting the contents corresponding to the acquisition  
request to the contents acquiring device through the network.

8. The contents acquiring system according to claim 7,  
wherein the valid expiration is set based on a predetermined  
valid term previously held when a valid term is not added to the  
contents to be an acquisition object.

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9. A contents acquiring system comprising:

a contents acquiring device including cache means for  
temporarily storing received contents, acquisition request  
accepting means for accepting an acquisition request for  
5 contents, cache deciding means for deciding whether the  
contents requested by the acquisition request are stored in the  
cache means or not, valid expiration setting means for setting a  
valid expiration as an update expiration of the contents based  
on a valid term added to the contents when it is decided by the  
10 cache deciding means that the contents are stored in the cache  
means, acquisition request transmitting means for  
transmitting the acquisition request for the contents when the  
contents are out of the valid expiration set by the valid  
expiration setting means, and contents receiving means for  
15 receiving contents based on the acquisition request  
transmitted from the acquisition request transmitting means;

and

a contents server including contents storing means for previously storing contents, acquisition request receiving means for receiving an acquisition request transmitted from the acquisition request transmitting means, and contents transmitting means for fetching the contents requested by the acquisition request received by the acquisition request receiving means from the contents storing means and for transmitting the contents to the acquisition request.

10. The contents acquiring system according to claim 9, further comprising valid term holding means for previously holding a valid term, and valid term addition deciding means for deciding whether the valid term is added to the contents or 5 not when it is decided by the cache deciding means that the contents are stored in the cache means, the valid expiration setting means serving to set the valid expiration based on a valid term held by the valid term holding means when it is decided by the valid term addition deciding means that the 10 valid term is not added.